

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A universal passive protector for an IV catheter, comprising: a hypodermic needle; an over-the-needle catheter, including a hub, disposed about the needle; a hub trap comprising first and second arms, ^{and a locking structure} an elongate sheath; and a slider connected to a proximal end of the needle, the slider being movable along the sheath from a distal position to a proximal position; wherein when the slider is in the distal position, the needle extends through ^{and cooperates with the} a locking structure of the hub trap ^{so as to retain} and retains the first and second arms in a closed position wherein the hub is trapped between the first and second arms; and when the slider is in the proximal position, a distal tip of the needle is proximal of the locking structure and the first and second arms are in an open position wherein the hub is released from the hub trap.
2. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein the hub is released only when the slider is in the proximal position, and remains trapped within the hub trap when the slider is in the distal position or in any position intermediate the distal position and the proximal position.
3. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein when the slider is in the distal position or in any position intermediate the distal position and the proximal position, the needle contacts the arms and provides a force counteracting a spring force biasing the arms toward the open position.
4. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein when the arms are in the open position, interlocking fingers of the first and second arms block the needle and prevent it from reemerging from the sheath.
5. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein a stop is positioned at a proximal end of the sheath and prevents the slider from disengaging the sheath via the proximal end.
6. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein the arms are pivotable about an axis substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the protector.
7. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein the slider comprises a hollow interior chamber in fluid communication with a central lumen of the needle.
8. (Original) The protector of claim 7, wherein a portion of the slider is transparent and allows viewing of the interior chamber.
9. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein the sheath comprises a first substantially cylindrical member.

10. (Original) The protector of claim 9, wherein the sheath further comprises a second substantially cylindrical member slidably disposed about the first member, such that the first and second members are telescoping.

11. (Original) The protector of claim 1, wherein the hub further comprises a substantially flat fin defining a plane substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the protector.

12. (New) A universal passive protector for an IV catheter, comprising:

a hypodermic needle;

an over-the-needle catheter, including a hub, disposed about the needle;

an elongate sheath;

a hub trap comprising first and second arms ^{and a locking structure, the first and second arms being} connected to a first end of the sheath,

the first and second arms being selectively engageable with the hub; and

a slider connected to a proximal end of the needle, the slider being disposed about the sheath and movable therealong from a distal position to a proximal position; wherein

when the slider is in the distal position, the needle extends through ^{and cooperates with the} a locking structure of the hub trap ^{So as to retain} and ~~retains~~ the first and second arms in a closed position wherein the hub is trapped between the first and second arms; and

when the slider is in the proximal position, a distal tip of the needle is proximal of the locking structure, the first and second arms are in an open position wherein the hub is released from the hub trap, and the needle is disposed entirely within the sheath.

13. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein when the slider is in the distal position or in any position intermediate the distal position and the proximal position, the needle contacts the arms and provides a force counteracting a spring force biasing the arms toward the open position.

14. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein when the arms are in the open position, interlocking fingers of the first and second arms block the needle and prevent it from reemerging from the sheath.

15. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein a stop at a proximal end of the sheath prevents the slider from disengaging the sheath via the proximal end.

16. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein the slider further comprises a hollow interior chamber in fluid communication with a central lumen of the needle.

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17. (New) The protector of claim 16, wherein at least a portion of the slider is transparent and allows viewing of the interior chamber.

18. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein at least a portion of the sheath is substantially cylindrical.

19. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein the sheath comprises first and second telescoping members.

20. (New) The protector of claim 12, wherein the hub further comprises a substantially flat fin defining a plane substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the protector.
